

## In The Moment by Val\_Creative

**Category:** Stranger Things (TV 2016)

**Genre:** Aged-Up Character(s), Alcohol, Alternate Universe - Canon Divergence, Drama & Romance, Fluff, Future Fic, Gay Will Byers, LGBTQ Themes, M/M, New Year's Kiss, Post-Season/Series 02

**Language:** English

**Characters:** Mike Wheeler, Will Byers

**Relationships:** Will Byers & Eleven, Will Byers/Mike Wheeler

**Status:** Completed

**Published:** 2018-01-01

**Updated:** 2018-01-01

**Packaged:** 2022-04-03 15:09:32

**Rating:** Teen And Up Audiences

**Warnings:** No Archive Warnings Apply

**Chapters:** 1

**Words:** 1,451

**Publisher:** archiveofourown.org

**Summary:**

There's no waiting for the right time. He's learning it the hard way, but it's nicer. (In which Mike and Will bond on a rooftop.)

## In The Moment

### Author's Note:

WELCOME TO 2018! LET'S MAKE THIS A FAR BETTER YEAR THAN THE LAST ONE. Emily (glove23 on FFN/AO3/Tumblr) and I decided to challenge ourself with a midnight fic for 2018 and we decided a New Year's theme for Stranger Things! I got "MikexWill and/or LucasxDustin - ice skating, blankets, fireworks" and I basically just mentioned fireworks in mine lmao oh well HAPPY NEW YEARS AND ANY THOUGHTS/COMMENTS ARE APPRECIATED!

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Glittering, glowing dots of stars pinprick the endless black.

Maybe he's had a little too much sparkly glasses of champagne, but Will decides to crawl onto the rooftop, to surround himself in the quiet and the snowfall.

It's been almost four years since his mom and Hopper married, right after Will became a sophomore in high school. They picked out a little, cozy house painted in blues and whites, with flowerpots and ivy and stepping stones, with an additional third-story with a dusty, huge attic.

El became his step-sister.

Jonathan moved out.

Will moved out too, then moved back in due to the expenses. It's been a whole month. His mom has been overjoyed to see him regularly, babbling about El visiting for the holidays and Jonathan, and Hopper can barely contain his excitement about seeing his daughter too.

*Jane L. Hopper.*

One of the most famed search and rescue personnel in the country. A prodigy in her field; El thrives in the chaos and adrenaline and fear.

She deserves the awards given to her and the recognition. All that El has ever wanted was to be accepted, to help other people who couldn't help themselves. Using her powers discretely just gave her the advantage.

Their house is packed to the brim with Hopper's police friends and the neighbors, along with parents to Will's friends. He hasn't spotted Lucas or Dustin, or even Max yet. Jonathan is still driving on the roads home, bringing along Nancy and Steve supposedly. They wouldn't be in Hawkins until early morning.

11:45.

Everyone chatters and hugs, shouting for more drinks.

Will's watch-face lights up in a yellowish, fluorescent light compared to the beams of silvery-white moon spilling onto his features and the angled, ice-crusted rooftop. Will carefully lifts himself out of the attic-window, sitting himself down.

He loves his family and friends, but not the constant noise.

The questions that come next — *how's the art classes going? How's freelancing? What are you going to do with your degree? Did you find SOMEONE nice?*

Will's nose crinkles.

It's not about how *NICE* they are... it's finding someone like him that's the hard part. He's dated both girls and boys, but girls aren't who he wants. Will doesn't understand why other people won't accept that. He's nineteen and self-aware of being gay, and it feels like the world around him is straight as *straight* can be.

When he hears the window-shutter creak open above his head, he assumes it's El. Not in the mood for being coddled or fussed over, Will turns around with a loud, frustrated sigh, opening his mouth.

"Got room for one more?" Mike asks, smiling and poking his head out.

A low, surprised noise escapes Will's lips.

"... D-did you follow me?"

"Kinda, yeah," Mike admits, swinging a leg out of the attic-window. His brilliantly white, open smile lengthens, until Will sees his dimples pop. He hasn't seen Mike in over a year, but he looks... incredible. That's the only word Will's brain can process right now besides *shit*. "Is there a password?"

Mike's foot slips initially on a rooftop shingle. Will groans.

Yeah, it's *don't get yourself killed*," he mutters, leaning up and steadying Mike's waist as the other man chuckles and sits down beside him.

"No promises."

11:52.

Will's gaze wanders from his own arm, to the skyline, and to Mike's moon-pale face. He feels a chill run bone-deep through his body as the alcohol gradually wears off. Mike glances over curiously, raising his eyebrows as Will slouches down further and wraps his arms tightly around his knees. "Aren't you cold, Will?"

It's a fair enough observation. He's only in red-and-white plaid under a long, dark sweater and jeans.

Will twists up his mouth, pretending to consider his answer.

"Nah," he breathes out, avoiding Mike's look.

Friends don't lie. That's one of the rules.

Will has been lying to everyone around him, to himself, for years about who he is... about what he wants... why does it matter anymore? Will's teeth clench around the very tip of his tongue. Mike doesn't even know — and if he does, he hasn't brought up Will's

sexuality to him. Or Will's ever-persistent *crush* on him.

He holds back a shiver, feeling the warmth of Mike's hand touching over his shoulder.

Will peeks over at him, smiling benevolently when the other man laughs and rubs Will's back in slow, crooked patterns. There's a hint of rich, warm cologne drifting off him. Will resists the urge to bury his face into Mike's bare neck.

"I miss you, you know," Mike whispers solemnly. "You ever gonna visit me in Chicago?"

Will's teeth sink harshly into his lower lip, instead of his swollen-feeling tongue inside his mouth. Mike vanished right after high school, attending university out-of-state for a biology and teaching degree. Will vanished too, hitch-hiking through Ohio and Pennsylvania and taking odd-end jobs for the daily use of toothpaste and bottles of water, art supplies, living in Jonathan's old car and drawing to his heart's content.

He drew the people Will met, the buildings and wildlife and the stories in his head. *Nightmares*.

His friends.

Will never drew Mike.

It's not that he didn't try to. He couldn't get him *right* — not like Mike deserved to be portrayed — in darks and lights and shades of all colors of the rainbow.

"Hey?"

11:59.

"Will?" Mike tries again, softening his voice.

He frowns in bemusement when the other man stares with a burning, wordless intensity.

Will's hand opens and slides over Mike's still lingering on Will's

shoulder. The illegal fireworks go off down the street, popping off into the air, bursting into smoky green and red. Will can hear everybody inside chanting and screaming along for the new year celebration — 10, 9, 8!

It's so loud.

7, 6!

Mike's eyes widen a little.

5, 4, 3!

Will feels himself gravitating closer, his heart racing.

2!

It could be his imagination, but he thinks Mike is getting closer too, shifting himself up with one of his feet planted to the roof. Will stares down at Mike's lips, swallowing visibly. Oh, god.

1!

That's when his foot jolts on the slick, asphalt roofing tile. The rest of Mike's body follows, sending him careening down towards the edge of the roof on his belly, picking up speed. Mike's name rips out of Will's throat, as soon as he hits the gutter, tumbling but clinging on. One of Mike's hands flail uselessly on the air.

Terror — it's on Mike's expression and lodged inside Will's chest as he screams for help.

Will has no idea if anyone can hear him over the music and drunken, triumphant shouts and fireworks.

He needs to *do* something. *Now*.

"Mike, I'm coming! Hold on!"

"*Will—no—!*"

He doesn't know if it's the lack of a cool head or just poor rotten luck,

but Will ends up reaching for him, only to find himself sliding as well. Will misses the attic-window ledge with his outstretched hand, an elbow smacking repeatedly on the icy-hard tiles as he rolls off.

This is it. He's going *hit* the concrete and—

Will squeezes his eyes shut, anticipating impact and finds himself weightless, seemingly floating. He gasps for air, reopening his eyes.

The glass table-top, below him, is only a *millimeter* from pressing to his nose.

He does float, carefully and slowly, away from crashing facefirst into the newly done porch, guided by El's hand and her concentration. Will ends up flopping onto his stomach into the frozen grass, picking himself up and wheezing, trembling from head to foot as he looks up.

She's alone, in her stretchy, midnight hose and rose-printed dress. Her high heels nowhere to be found. Will feels a twinge of gratitude and is about to hug her when he hears Mike's yell penetrate the night air. He watches Mike fall from the third-story, right into the snowdrift.

"Mike!" Will screams, racing over to him, waving the powdery snow out of his airspace.

He grabs onto Mike's arm and heaves him up. His panic short-circuits when he hears Mike laughing shakily, tugging Will down onto him, throwing him into the snow and *kissing* him. Pressing mouth-to-mouth, their chins bumping, Mike's snowy-flecked fingers raking into Will's hair.

He shouldn't feel so *hot* like this, like Will could melt into the ground, liquefy against Mike's chest, and didn't... they almost *die*...?

"Mike," Will mumbles half-protesting. His cheeks wind-flushed against Mike's palms cupping.

At the acknowledging, rumbling noise, he begins to grin and nuzzles their foreheads together, listening to Mike exhale Will's name like a psalm.

There's no waiting for the right moment.

He's learning it the hard way, but it's *nicer*.

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